

ON LINE



ALL OUR KIN INC.

A SAFE AND LOVING PLACE WHERE PARENTS AND CHILDREN CAN LEARN

March 13, 2014

Senator Holder-Winfield, Representative Tercyak, and Esteemed Members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Rachel Wilf, and I am a Policy Fellow at All Our Kin, a nationally-recognized, Connecticut-based nonprofit that trains, supports, and sustains family child care providers to ensure that children and families have the foundation they need to succeed in school and in life. I am here today to testify in support of H.B. No. 5527, An Act Concerning a Domestic Workers Bill of Rights.

Those who work with our young, our elderly, and our sick are essential to the ongoing prosperity of our society. These individuals help to raise the next generation and care for those in need of comfort and support. They also enable other adults to contribute to society through their own work, with the peace of mind that comes from knowing their loved ones are in safe care. These professions make all other work possible. Yet the pay and respect they are given fail to reflect how essential their contributions are.

At All Our Kin, we see the effects of this chronic undervaluing on the family child care providers who serve many of our youngest and most vulnerable children.

Our nation faces an acute shortage of quality child care for infants and toddlers — especially for low-income families. Of infants in non-parental care, more than three quarters are in some form of home-based care arrangement. But despite the crucial role that family child care programs play both in educating the next generation and enabling parents to succeed in the workforce, the majority of these programs are under-resourced and under-equipped. Providers often care for children in their homes for ten to twelve hours a day and are isolated from other educators and from opportunities for training. As a result, nationwide, only nine percent of family child care programs provide quality learning experiences for children.

All Our Kin supports family child care providers so that they can build sustainable businesses and offer high-quality care to children. We offer providers training, materials, and connections to other professional caregivers. Our work proves that quality, sustainable family child care is possible with sufficient investment.

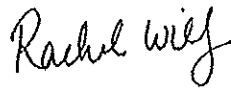
We know that domestic workers, who work in someone else's household, confront many of the same challenges as the providers we serve. Domestic workers may provide child care, care for elders, or serve as a housekeeper or personal aide. They are often isolated, work long hours for little pay, and develop close emotional ties with their clients and employers that can make it difficult to advocate for themselves as employees.

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Their work is regularly undervalued and viewed as separate from "traditional" work. Like family child care providers, domestic workers are overwhelmingly female. In 2010, 86.1 percent of personal and home care aides and 90.1 percent of those providing home health care services were women (compared to 94.7 percent of all child care workers). According to analysis in a recent study from the University of Illinois at Chicago, 46 percent of domestic workers are immigrants, many of them undocumented. The invisibility of this workforce often results in their vulnerability and ongoing marginalization.

This is why All Our Kin supports the passage of a Domestic Workers Bill of Rights in Connecticut. The labor of domestic workers is central to our society's prosperity. We need to respect and protect these workers, and we can do so by improving their working conditions, wages, benefits, and hours. We look forward to the day when all of those who serve as such a vital part of our society are respected, recognized, and paid according to the value of their work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachel Wilf".

Rachel Wilf

Policy Fellow  
All Our Kin, Inc.